DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 438 342 UD 033 300

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TITLE	Juvenile Arrests, 1998. Juvenile Justice Bulletin.
INSTITUTION	Department of Justice, Washington, DC. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
REPORT NO	NCJ-179064
PUB DATE	1999-12-00
NOTE	13p.
CONTRACT	95-JN-FX-K008
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/jjpubs.html.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adolescents; Blacks; *Crime; *Juvenile Justice; Urban Youth; *Violence; Whites; Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS	*Arrests

ABSTRACT

This report provides a summary and analysis of national and state juvenile arrest data in the United States. In 1998, law enforcement agencies made an estimated 2.6 million arrests of persons under age 18. Federal Bureau of Investigations statistics indicate that juveniles account for 18% of all arrests, and 17% of all violent crime arrests in 1998. However, between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for violent crimes fell 19%, compared with a 6% decline for adults. Nevertheless, the number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes was still 15% above the 1989 level. Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities in 1998. Fifty-five percent of juvenile arrests for violent crimes involved white youth, and 42% involved black youth, although only about 15% of the juvenile population is black. Black youths were also, although to a lesser extent, overrepresented in juvenile property arrests. The decline in juvenile arrests is no cause for complacency, since juvenile crime is still far too prevalent. (Contains 19 graphs and 5 tables.) (SLD)

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ED 438 342

Shay Bilchik, Administrator
December 1999
JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Juvenile Arrests 1998

Howard N. Snyder

In 1998, law enforcement agencies in the United States made an estimated 2.6 million arrests of persons under age 18.* According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), juveniles accounted for 18% of all arrests and 17% of all violent crime arrests in 1998. The substantial growth in juvenile violent crime arrests that began in the late 1980's peaked in 1994. In 1998, for the fourth consecutive year, the total number of juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses—murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—declined. Specifically, between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses fell 19%, compared with just a 6% decline for adults. However, even with this substantial decline, the number of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests in 1998 was still 15% above the 1989 level. In comparison, the number of adult arrests for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1998 was just 3% greater than in 1989.

These findings are derived from data reported annually by local law enforcement agencies across the country to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Based on these data, the FBI prepares its annual *Crime in the United States* report, which summarizes crimes known to the police and arrests made during the reporting calendar year. This information is used to characterize the extent and nature of juvenile crime that comes to the attention of the justice system. Other recent findings from the UCR Program are:

- Of the nearly 2,000 juveniles murdered in 1998, 48% were killed with a firearm, down from 56% in 1997.
- Juveniles were involved in 12% of murder arrests, 14% of aggravated assault arrests, 35% of burglary arrests, 27% of robbery arrests, and 24% of weapons arrests in 1998.
- Juvenile murder arrests increased substantially between 1987 and 1993. In the peak year of 1993, there were about 3,800 juvenile arrests for murder. Between 1993 and 1998, juvenile arrests for murder declined, with the number of arrests in 1998 (2,100) about half that in 1993.
- Between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for burglary declined 17% and juvenile arrests for motor vehicle theft declined 40%.
- Juveniles were involved in 13% of all drug abuse violation arrests in 1998. Between 1989 and 1998, juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations increased 86%.
- Juvenile arrests for curfew and loitering violations increased 178% between 1989 and 1998. In 1998, 27% of curfew arrests involved juveniles under age 15 and 30% involved females.
- In 1998, 58% of arrests for running away from home involved females and 40% involved juveniles under age 15.
- Arrests of juveniles accounted for 12% of all violent crimes cleared by arrest in 1998—specifically, 6% of murders, 11% of forcible rapes, 16% of robberies, and 12% of aggravated assaults.

* Throughout this Bulletin, persons under age 18 are referred to as juveniles. See Notes on page 12.

From the Administrator

A decade of public attention to the problem of juvenile violence is bearing fruit. The reduction in violent juvenile crime is reflected in arrest data for 1998. Juvenile arrests for violent crime are 19% below their peak in 1994. The number of juvenile arrests for murder decreased 48% from 1994 to 1998. The number of juvenile arrests for each violent crime category and the percentage of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrests also have declined—despite continuing growth in the juvenile population.

Such good news, however, should not foster complacency nor lead us to weaken our efforts to combat violent juvenile crime, which despite decreases is still too prevalent. Rather, we need to build on these accomplishments with the implementation of additional effective prevention programs and a stronger juvenile justice system. This type of response will further reduce the level of juvenile violence that endangers our communities and will address other problem behaviors that prevent youth from achieving their potential.

Juvenile Arrests 1998 provides a summary and analysis of national and State juvenile arrest data reported in the FBI's October 1999 report, *Crime in the United States 1998*. With sound information such as this and a solid commitment to supporting healthy, law-abiding youth, we can continue to make progress in reducing juvenile crime.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

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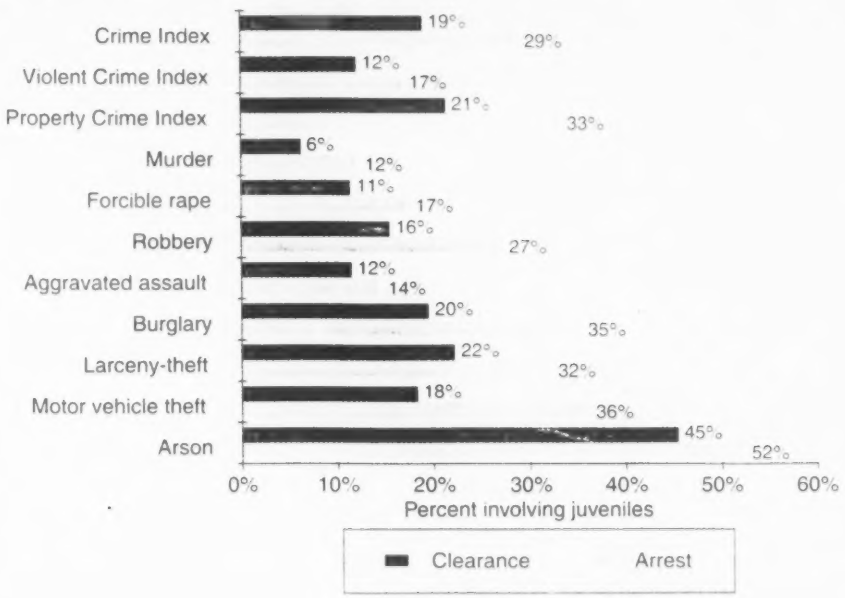
What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this Bulletin properly, the reader must have a clear understanding of what these statistics count. The arrest statistics report the number of arrests made by law enforcement agencies in a particular year—not the number of individuals arrested, nor the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not equivalent to the number of people arrested, because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once in the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent counts of crimes committed by arrested individuals, because a series of crimes committed by one individual may culminate in a single arrest, or a single crime may result in the arrest of more than one person. This latter situation, where many arrests result from one crime, is relatively common in juvenile law-violating behavior, because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. This is the primary reason why arrest statistics should not be used to indicate the relative proportion of crime committed by juveniles and adults. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of flow into the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Arrest statistics also have limitations for measuring the volume of arrests for a particular offense. Under the UCR Program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify an arrest by the most serious offense charged in that arrest. For example, the arrest of a youth charged with aggravated assault and possession of a controlled substance would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore, when arrest statistics show that law enforcement agencies made an estimated 205,800 arrests of young people for drug abuse violations in 1998, it means that a drug abuse violation was the most serious charge in these 205,800 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 1998 included a drug charge as a lesser offense.

The juvenile proportion of arrests exceeded the juvenile proportion of crimes cleared by arrest in each offense category, reflecting the fact that juveniles are more likely to commit crimes in groups and are more likely to be arrested than are adults



Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), tables 28 and 38.

What do clearance statistics count?

Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were resolved by an arrest or other, exceptional means (e.g., death of the offender, unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, one arrest could clear 40 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 40 of these crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if the crime was committed by a group of offenders. For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports information on the proportion of clearances that were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime committed by this age group than is the arrest proportion, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the juvenile proportion of crimes.

For example, the FBI reports that persons under age 18 accounted for 27% of all robbery arrests but only 16% of all robberies that were cleared in 1998. If it can be assumed that offender characteristics of cleared robberies are similar to those of robberies that were not cleared, then it would be appropriate to conclude that persons under age 18 were responsible for 16% of all robberies in 1998. However, the offender characteristics of cleared and noncleared robberies may differ for a number of reasons. If, for example, juvenile robbers were more easily apprehended than adult robbers, the proportion of robberies cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18 would overestimate the juvenile responsibility for all robberies. To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI's reporting guidelines require the clearance to be tied to the oldest offender in the group if more than one person is arrested for a crime.

In summary, while the interpretation of reported clearance proportions is not straightforward, these data are the closest measure generally available of the proportion of crime known to law enforcement that is attributed to persons under age 18. These data should provide a barometer of the changing contribution of persons under age 18 to the Nation's crime problems.

The U.S. murder rate in 1998 was the lowest since 1967

The primary focus of each *Crime in the United States* report is the estimated number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. Although only a portion of all crimes that occur are reported to law enforcement, those that are provide an assessment of the workloads of the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

The FBI estimates that in 1998, 7,373,900 larceny-thefts, 2,330,000 burglaries, 1,240,800 motor vehicle thefts, 974,400 aggravated assaults, 446,630 robberies, 93,100 forcible rapes, and 16,910 murders were reported to law enforcement agencies. One would have to go back to 1970 to find a lower annual number of murder victims in the United States and to 1967 to find a lower murder rate (i.e., murders per 100,000 persons in the population).

Eighty-eight percent of murder victims in 1998 (or about 14,960 victims) were 18 years of age or older. Fewer adults were murdered in the United States in 1998 than in any year since at least 1976.

In 1998, about 1,960 murder victims were under age 18. This level is substantially below that of the peak year of 1993, when 2,880 juveniles were murdered. However, this decline only returned the level to that of 1988. The number of juveniles murdered in the United States in 1998 was still nearly 300 more than in a typical year between 1980 and 1987.

In 1998, about 920 persons under age 13 were murdered. The number of preadolescent murder victims fluctuated within a narrow range between 1980 and 1998, reaching its highest level in 1993 (1,080 victims) and its lowest level in 1984 (810 victims).

In 1998, 65% of all murder victims were killed with a firearm. Adults were more likely to be killed with a firearm (68%) than were juveniles (48%). However, the involvement of a firearm depended greatly on the age of the juvenile victim. While 16% of murdered juveniles under age 13 were killed with a firearm in 1998, 77% of murdered juveniles age 13 or older were killed with a firearm. The most common method for murdering children under the age of 9 was by physical assault.

Although the number of juvenile arrests in 1998—2.6 million—was 1% above the 1994 level, juvenile arrests for violent crime dropped 19%

Most Serious Offense	1998 Estimated Number of Juvenile Arrests	Percent of Total Juvenile Arrests		Percent Change		
		Female	Under Age 15	1989–98	1994–98	1997–98
Total	**2,603,300**	**27%**	**31%**	**24%**	**1%**	**–4%**
Crime Index total	708,300	26	38	–9	–18	–11
Violent Crime Index	112,200	17	31	15	–19	–8
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	2,100	8	9	–23	–48	–12
Forcible rape	5,300	2	37	–3	–9	0
Robbery	32,500	9	25	9	–29	–17
Aggravated assault	72,300	22	33	21	–13	–3
Property Crime Index	596,100	28	39	–12	–17	–11
Burglary	116,000	11	38	–22	–17	–9
Larceny-theft	417,100	35	41	–4	–14	–12
Motor vehicle theft	54,100	17	26	–39	–40	–15
Arson	9,000	11	66	10	–24	–8
Nonindex						
Other assaults	237,700	31	41	68	10	2
Forgery and counterfeiting	7,100	35	13	–2	–16	–12
Fraud	11,300	33	16	44	–8	6
Embezzlement	1,600	42	5	–5	56	19
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	33,800	13	26	–27	–27	–12
Vandalism	126,800	12	44	9	–18	–3
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	45,200	9	32	15	–30	–8
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,400	50	14	–6	18	4
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	15,900	7	50	–1	–5	–4
Drug abuse violations	205,800	14	16	86	26	–3
Gambling	1,600	3	14	86	–31	–34
Offenses against the family and children	10,200	37	37	166	103	3
Driving under the influence	21,000	17	3	3	39	13
Liquor law violations	157,300	30	10	20	39	10
Drunkenness	24,600	18	13	2	23	2
Disorderly conduct	183,700	28	35	61	20	–4
Vagrancy	2,900	17	26	–1	–37	–17
All other offenses (except traffic)	453,000	25	27	53	20	4
Suspicion	1,300	24	26	–56	–17	–9
Curfew and loitering	187,800	30	27	178	49	–3
Runaways	165,100	58	40	–5	–21	–15

- In 1998, there were an estimated 2,100 juvenile arrests for murder. Between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for murder declined 48%.
- Females accounted for 22% of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault and 31% of arrests for simple (i.e., other) assaults. Females represented over half (58%) of all juveniles arrested for running away from home.
- In the 10-year period between 1989 and 1998, there were substantial declines in the number of juvenile arrests for murder (23%), burglary (22%), and motor vehicle theft (39%) and major increases in arrests for aggravated assault (21%), other assaults (68%), drug abuse violations (86%), and curfew violations (178%).

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), tables 29, 32, 34, 36, and 38. Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

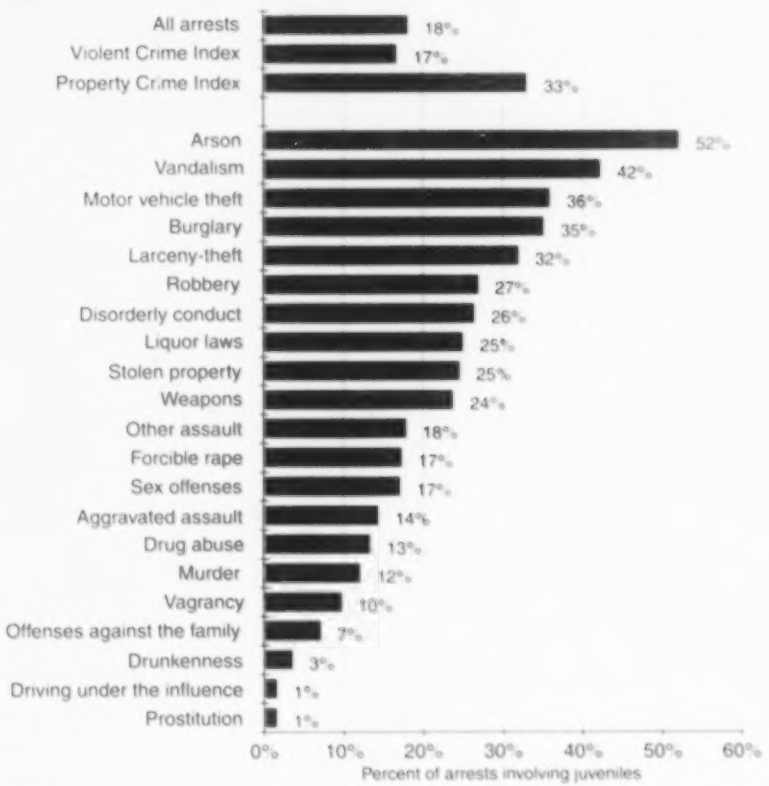
The juvenile share of the crime problem decreased in 1998

The relative responsibility of juveniles for the U.S. crime problem is hard to determine. Studying the proportion of crimes that are cleared by the arrest of juveniles gives one estimate of the juvenile responsibility for crime.

The clearance data in the *Crime in the United States* series show that the proportion of violent crimes attributed to juveniles has declined in recent years. Juvenile involvement in violent crime grew from 9% or 10% in the early 1980's to 14% in 1994 and 1995. Since 1995, the proportion of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrest has declined, reaching 12% in 1998.

The proportion of murders cleared by juvenile arrests peaked in 1994 at 10.5%. In 1998, this figure had dropped to 6.3%, the lowest level since 1987 but still above the 4.6% level of the mid-1980's. The juvenile proportion of cleared forcible rapes peaked in 1995 (15%) and then fell, with the 1998 proportion (11%) the lowest in the decade. The juvenile proportion of robbery clearances in 1998 (16%) was below its peak in 1995 (20%) but above the levels of the early 1980's (12%). Similarly, the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances in 1998 (12%) was below its peak in 1994 (13%) but still above the levels of the early 1980's (9%). The proportion of Property Crime Index offenses cleared by juvenile arrest in 1998 (21%) was 2 percentage points below the average for the years between 1980 and 1997.

In 1998, juveniles were involved in about 1 in 6 arrests for a violent crime, 1 in 3 arrests for a property offense, and 1 in 4 arrests for a weapons law violation



Note: Running away from home and curfew and loitering violations are not presented in this figure because, by definition, only juveniles can be arrested for these offenses.

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), table 38.

In 1998, 27% of juvenile arrests were arrests of females

Law enforcement agencies made 697,000 arrests of females under age 18 in 1998. Between 1994 and 1998, arrests of juvenile females increased more (or decreased less) than male arrests in most offense categories.

Most Serious Offense	Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests 1994–98	
	Female	Male
Robbery	–26	–29
Aggravated assault	7	–18
Burglary	–3	–18
Larceny-theft	-5	–17
Motor vehicle theft	–28	–42
Simple assault	29	4
Vandalism	–5	–20
Weapons	–20	–31
Drug abuse violations	43	23
Liquor laws	47	35
Curfew and loitering	60	44
Runaways	–20	–23

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998*, table 35.

Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities

The racial composition of the juvenile population in 1998 was 79% white, 15% black, and 5% other races, with most Hispanics classified as white. In 1998, in contrast to the proportions in the general population, 55% of juvenile arrests for violent crimes involved white youth and 42% involved black youth. To a much lesser extent, black youth were also overrepresented in juvenile property arrests, with 27% of these arrests involving black youth and 70% involving white youth.

Most Serious Offense	Black Proportion of Juvenile Arrests in 1998
Murder	49%
Forcible rape	39
Robbery	54
Aggravated assault	37
Burglary	24
Larceny-theft	26
Motor vehicle theft	36
Weapons	32
Drug abuse violations	32
Curfew and loitering	27
Runaways	18

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998*, table 43.

Compared with adult violence, a smaller proportion of juvenile violence was directed toward family members

Within *Crime in the United States 1998*, the FBI released the results of a new study documenting the characteristics of family violence incidents reported to law enforcement. This work is based on data supplied by law enforcement agencies in 14 States through the UCR Program's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The study explored the relationships between victims and their offenders in over 400,000 confrontations in 1998. Although there is no characterization of the findings as nationally representative, the data do represent the experiences of a large number of police agencies.

Overall, the FBI found that about 27% of the victims of violent crimes reported to law enforcement were related to one or more of their offenders. Of these family violence crimes, 94% were classified as assaults (e.g., aggravated assault, simple assault, or intimidation).

Victims were slightly more likely to be female in violent crimes in general (58%) than in crimes classified as family violence confrontations (56%). Victims were as likely to be white in violent crimes in general (74%) as in crimes classified as family violence confrontations (75%). Of all family violence victims, 43% were the offender's spouse or common-law spouse, 11% the offender's child, 9% parents, 9% siblings, and 11% other family members. The remaining 17% of victims were classified by law enforcement as offenders (e.g., family disputes where both husband and wife are charged with assault) and their family relationship was not noted.

Juvenile offenders were involved in 12% of these family violence confrontations. Of all violent crimes committed by juveniles, 18% could be classified as family violence, compared with 31% of violent crimes committed by adult offenders.

The victim was a family member in 18% of all forcible rapes committed by a juvenile or by an adult. When a juvenile was the offender, the victim was a family member in 15% of aggravated assaults, 20% of simple assaults, and 10% of intimidations reported to law enforcement. For crimes by adults, the victim was a family member in 23% of aggravated assaults, 36% of simple assaults, and 18% of intimidations.

Juveniles were the victims in 25% of all violent crimes and 20% of all family violence incidents reported to law enforcement

Crime Type/ Offender Type	Percent of Juvenile Victims				
	All Violent Crime	Rape	Aggravated Assault	Simple Assault	Intimidation
All violent crime					
All offenders	25%	58%	22%	24%	17%
Juvenile offenders	66	94	58	67	50
Adult offenders	16	49	14	14	11
Family violence confrontation					
All offenders	20	73	18	16	8
Juvenile offenders	40	97	34	34	17
Adult offenders	17	67	15	14	7

- Juveniles were the victims in 58% of all forcible rapes, with 15% of victims under age 12. When the rape occurred between family members, a juvenile was the victim 73% of the time and 39% of all victims were under age 12.
- Juveniles were the victims in two-thirds (66%) of all violent crimes committed by juvenile offenders, but the victims in only 40% of the violent crimes committed by juveniles against other family members.
- Juveniles were the victims in 17% of the family violence confrontations perpetrated by adults.

Notes: In this study, crimes of violence include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and intimidation. A crime is classified as a family violence confrontation if the victim is a spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, or in-law. This definition excludes boyfriends, girlfriends, and ex-spouses. Victims may not include all family members who were exposed to the violent incident.

Data source: Analysis of data presented in *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999).

Juvenile offenders were involved in about 1 in 10 family violence assaults reported to law enforcement

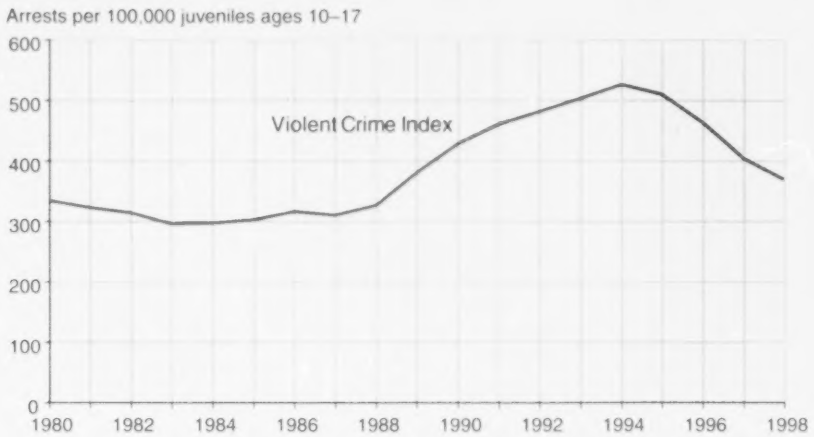
Crime Type/ Victim Type	Percent of Juvenile Offenders				
	All Violent Crime	Rape	Aggravated Assault	Simple Assault	Intimidation
All violent crime					
All victims	19%	19%	18%	19%	15%
Juvenile victims	49	31	48	54	45
Adult victims	8	3	10	8	9
Family violence confrontation					
All victims	12	19	13	11	9
Juvenile victims	24	25	24	23	19
Adult victims	9	2	10	9	8

- Juveniles were the offenders in less than 1 in 10 violent crimes against adults, even when the crime occurred between family members.
- In crimes reported to law enforcement, nearly half (49%) of all violent crimes against juveniles were committed by another juvenile. In comparison, when the crime was one of family violence, 76% of the offenders of juvenile victims were adults.

Notes: In this study, crimes of violence include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and intimidation. A crime is classified as a family violence confrontation if the victim is a spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, or in-law. This definition excludes boyfriends, girlfriends, and ex-spouses. Victims may not include all family members who were exposed to the violent incident.

Data source: Analysis of data presented in *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999).

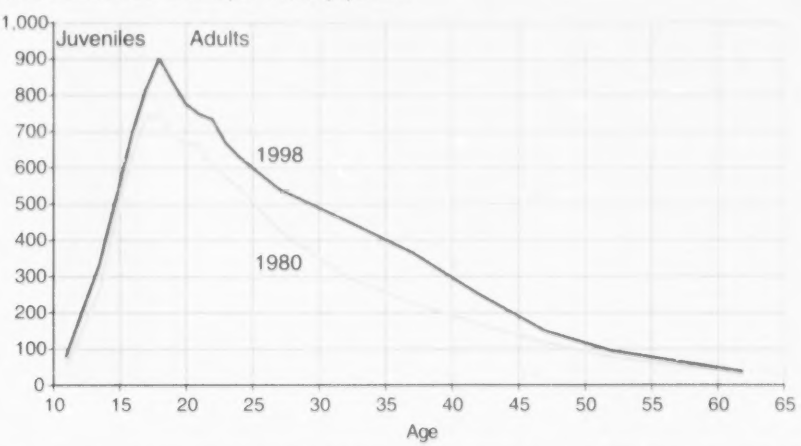
The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate in 1998 was at its lowest level in 10 years—30% below the peak year of 1994



- The growth in the juvenile violent crime arrest rate from 1988 to 1994 was largely erased by 1998, with the 1998 rate just 13% above the 1988 level.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

Between 1980 and 1998, Violent Crime Index arrest rates increased for all age groups—but more for adults than juveniles



- Between 1980 and 1998, the Violent Crime Index arrest rates for persons ages 15–17 increased about 10%. In comparison, the rates increased more for persons age 18 and older, with the largest increases being for persons between ages 30 and 45. More specifically, the rate increased 20% for persons ages 18–24, 25% for persons ages 25–29, 50% for persons ages 30–34, 60% for persons ages 35–39, and 50% for persons ages 40–44. Even the arrest rate for persons ages 60–64 increased by nearly 20%.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

Juvenile arrests for violence in 1998 were the lowest in a decade

The FBI assesses trends in the volume of violent crimes by monitoring four offenses that are consistently reported by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are pervasive in all geographical areas of the country. These four crimes—murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—together form the Violent Crime Index.

After years of relative stability in the number of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests, the increase in these arrests between 1988 and 1994 focused national attention on the problem of juvenile violence. After peaking in 1994, these arrests dropped in 1995, 1996, 1997, and again in 1998. The number of juvenile arrests in 1998 was the lowest in the 1990's for all Violent Crime Index offenses combined and the lowest since 1987 for murder, 1983 for forcible rape, 1987 for robbery, and 1991 for aggravated assault.

Between 1994 and 1998, the decline in the number of violent crime arrests was greater for juveniles than adults for most violent crime offenses:

Most Serious Offense	Percent Change in Arrests 1994–98	
	Juvenile	Adult
Violent Crime Index	–19%	–6%
Murder	–48	–18
Forcible rape	–9	–14
Robbery	–29	–14
Aggravated assault	–13	–3

Few juveniles were arrested for violent crime

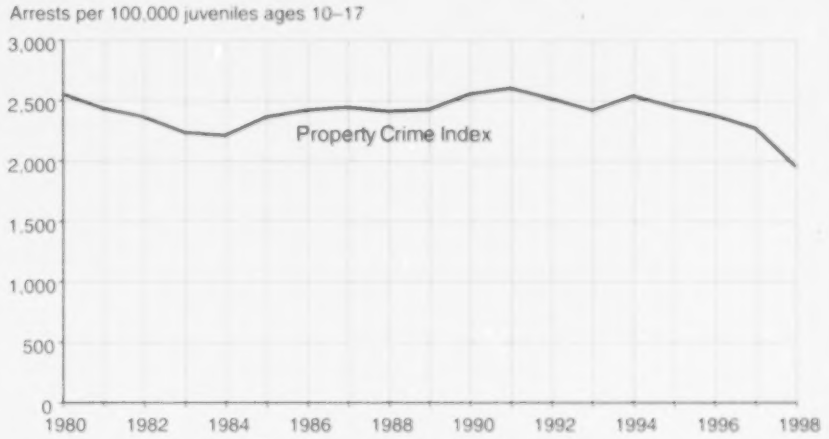
The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate indicates that in 1998, there were 370 arrests for these violent crimes for every 100,000 youth in the United States between 10 and 17 years of age. If each of these arrests involved a different juvenile (i.e., if each juvenile arrested in 1998 for a Violent Crime Index offense was arrested only once that year—which is unlikely), then no more than 1 in every 270 persons ages 10 through 17 in the United States was arrested for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1998. This means that about one-quarter of 1% of juveniles ages 10–17 were arrested for a violent crime in 1998.

Juvenile arrests for property crimes declined substantially in 1998

As with violent crime, the FBI assesses trends in the volume of property crimes by monitoring four offenses that are consistently reported by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are pervasive in all geographical areas of the country. These four crimes, which form the Property Crime Index, are burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

For the period from 1980 through 1997, during which juvenile violent crime arrests increased and then decreased precipitously, juvenile property crime arrest rates remained relatively constant. Between 1980 and 1997, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate reached its highest level in 1991 (2,610) and its lowest level in 1984 (2,220). Between 1997 and 1998, however, the rate declined 14% and fell to its lowest level in a generation. In 1998, law enforcement made 1,960 arrests for Property Crime Index offenses for every 100,000 youth between 10 and 17 years of age.

The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses in 1998 was at its lowest level since at least 1980



- In stark contrast to the substantial fluctuations in juvenile violent crime arrest rates between 1980 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses changed relatively little between 1980 and 1998.

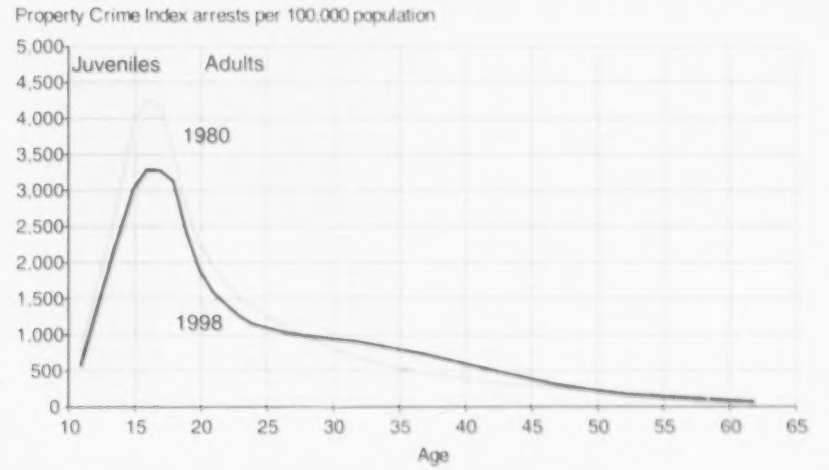
Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

Most arrested juveniles were referred to court

In most States, some persons under age 18 are, due to their age or by statutory exclusion, under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For arrested persons under age 18 *and* under the original jurisdiction of their State's juvenile justice system, the FBI's UCR Program monitors what happens as a result of the arrest. This is the only instance in the UCR Program in which the statistics on arrests coincide with State variations in the legal definition of a juvenile.

In 1998, 22% of arrests involving youth who were eligible in their State for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within law enforcement agencies, which then released the youth. The FBI reports that 69% of juvenile arrests were referred to juvenile court, and 7% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. The proportion of arrests sent to juvenile court has gradually increased from 1980 to 1998. In 1998, the proportion of juvenile arrests sent to juvenile court was similar in cities and suburban areas (68%) and somewhat greater in rural counties (74%).

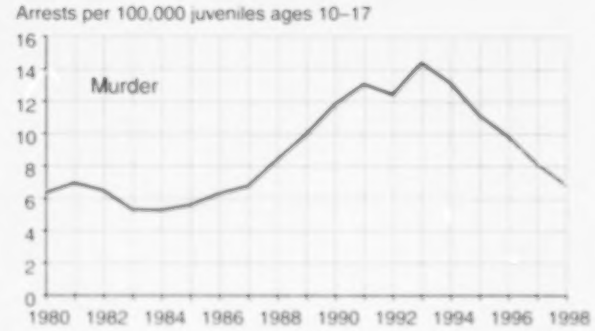
Counter to the violent crime arrest rate patterns, the Property Crime Index arrest rate in 1998 was below the rate in 1980 for all persons under age 25



- The only age groups with substantially higher Property Crime Index arrest rates in 1998 than in 1980 were persons between the ages of 30 and 45.

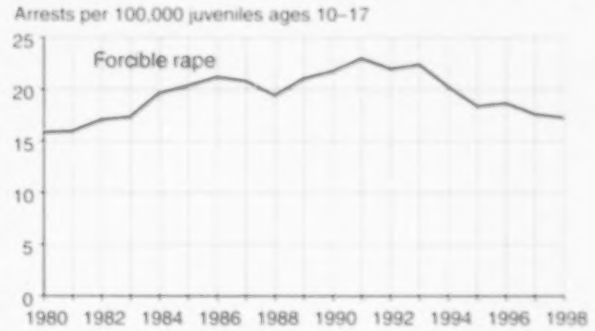
Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

Of all Violent Crime Index offenses, the juvenile arrest rate for murder showed both the greatest increase and the greatest decline between 1980 and 1998



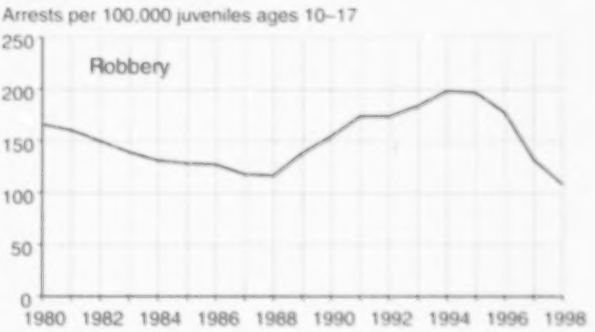
Murder

- In 1988, the juvenile arrest rate for murder rose above the rates experienced in previous years.
- From the base year of 1987 to its peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled.
- The consistently sharp declines in the juvenile murder arrest rate from 1993 through 1998 have returned the rate to its 1987 level, negating all of the increases that stimulated so many changes in juvenile justice policy in the 1990's.



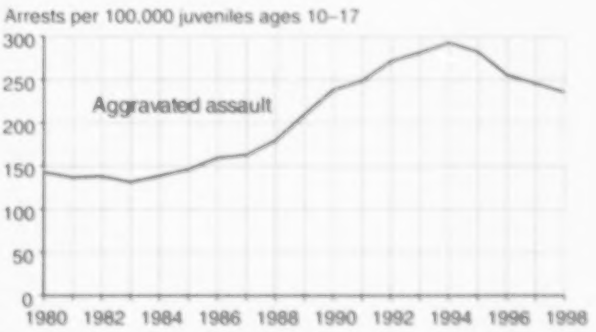
Forcible Rape

- More than for any other Violent Crime Index offense, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape has been confined to a relatively limited range from the early 1980's through 1998.
- The juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape in 1998 was at its lowest level since 1982 and 25% below the peak year of 1991.



Robbery

- The juvenile arrest rate for robbery declined by 30% between 1980 and 1988.
- With growth between the low year of 1988 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for robbery increased 70% by 1994, reaching a level nearly 20% above the 1980 rate.
- Following sharp declines in 1996, 1997, and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for robbery in 1998 was at its lowest level since at least 1980—45% below the peak year of 1994.



Aggravated Assault

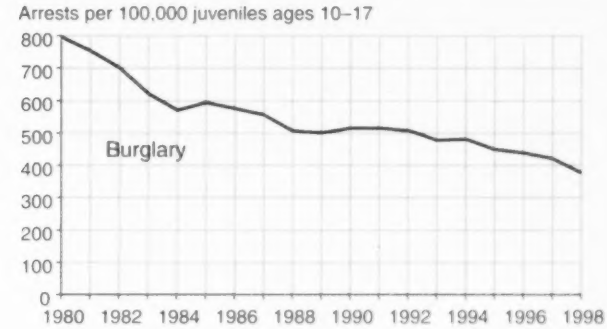
- Outpacing the large increases in robbery arrests, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault more than doubled between 1983 and 1994.
- Unlike the juvenile arrest rate for robbery, which fell to its lowest level in a generation in 1998, the decline in the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was more moderate—only 20%.
- In 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was 78% above its 1983 low point.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

Offenses within the Property Crime Index span a wide range of severities and have had very different juvenile arrest trends

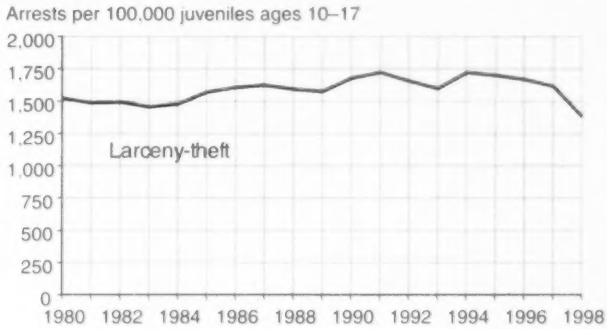
Burglary

- The juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined consistently and substantially between 1980 and 1998.
- The juvenile arrest rate in 1998 was half of that in 1980.
- The number of burglary arrests declined for both juveniles and adults between 1989 and 1998, with adult arrests down 33% and juvenile arrests down 22%.



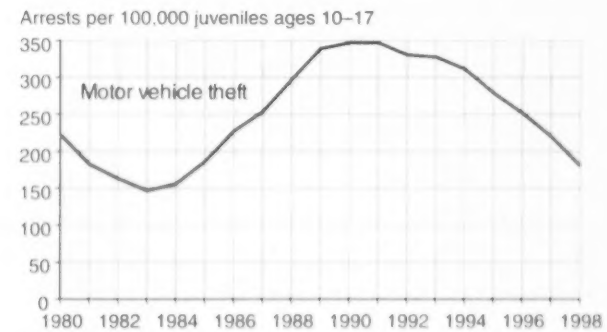
Larceny-Theft

- In comparison with the juvenile arrest rate for other Property Crime Index offenses, the rate for larceny-theft remained essentially constant between 1980 and 1998.
- The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft in 1998 was the lowest since at least 1980.
- Over the 10 years between 1989 and 1998, while juvenile arrests for larceny-theft declined 4%, adult arrests dropped 19%.



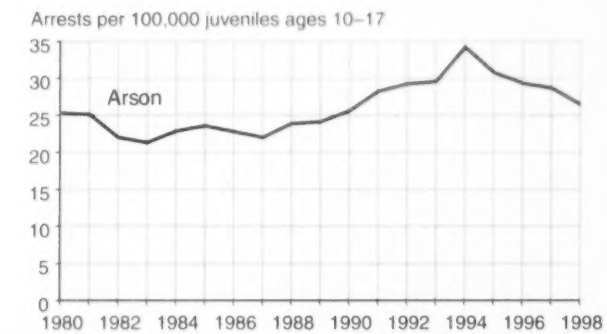
Motor Vehicle Theft

- The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft soared between 1983 and 1990, up nearly 140%.
- Between 1990 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft was cut almost in half, so that the rate in 1998 was at its lowest level since 1984.
- Between 1989 and 1998, the number of arrests for motor vehicle theft fell more for juveniles (39%) than for adults (25%).



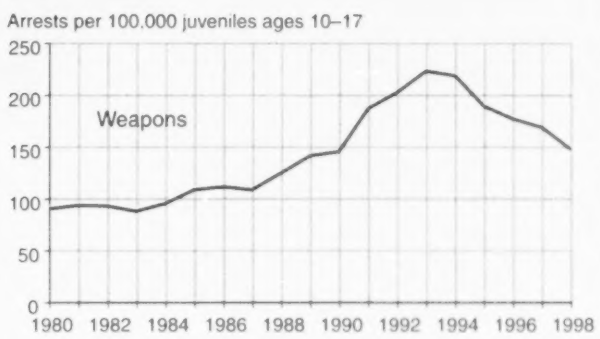
Arson

- Compared with juvenile arrest rates for the other three Property Crime Index offenses, the rate for arson is relatively small. In fact, to place the magnitude of juvenile arson arrests in perspective, for every 1 juvenile arrested for murder in 1998, 4 were arrested for arson, 25 were arrested for motor vehicle theft, and 200 were arrested for larceny-theft.
- The juvenile arrest rate for arson in 1990 was greater than in any year in the 1980's. The rate grew until it reached a peak in 1994. Between 1994 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for arson declined 23%, returning to the 1990 level.



Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

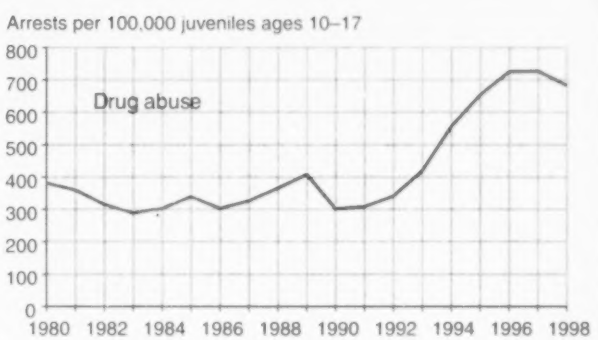
Trends in juvenile arrest rates for weapons law violations and for murder were similar between 1980 and 1998



- The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations more than doubled between 1987 and 1993, as did the juvenile arrest rate for murder.
- Between 1993 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rates for both murder and weapons law violations declined substantially, with the juvenile murder arrest rate falling by half and the weapon arrest rate dropping by one-third.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

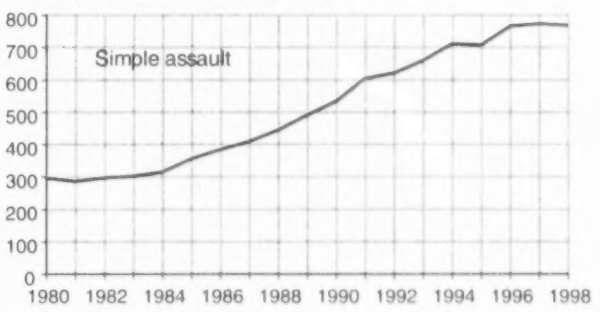
The juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations in 1998 was twice the average rate of the 1980's



- After staying relatively constant for over a decade, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations broke out of the range in 1994, leveling off in 1996, 1997, and 1998.
- The increase in the number of drug abuse violation arrests between 1989 and 1998 was far greater for juveniles (86%) than for adults (14%) and greater for female juveniles (113%) than for male juveniles (82%).

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

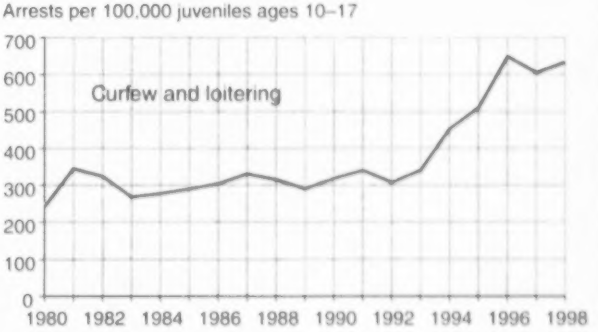
The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased consistently and substantially from the early 1980's to the late 1990's



- Like juvenile arrest rate trends for aggravated assault, the simple assault rates increased consistently between 1980 and 1994.
- Unlike aggravated assault, however, the simple assault arrest rate continued to increase between 1994 and 1998.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

After years of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations nearly doubled between 1993 and 1996



- The peak level for the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations reached in 1996 was maintained in 1997 and 1998.
- Of all juveniles arrested for curfew and loitering violations in 1998, 71% were white, 30% were female, and 27% were under age 15.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. *[See data source note on page 12 for detail.]*

State variations in juvenile arrest rates may reflect differences in juvenile law-violating behavior, police behavior, and/or community standards

State	Reporting Coverage	1998 Arrest Rate [a] Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Drug Abuse	Alcohol Violation[b]	State	Reporting Coverage	1998 Arrest Rate [a] Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Drug Abuse	Alcohol Violation[b]
Total U.S.	74%[c]	394	2,130	699	636	Missouri	52%	416	2,667	766	417
Alabama	94	191	1,050	294	269	Montana	37	121	1,647	157	1,891
Alaska	87	363	2,862	665	790	Nebraska	89	160	2,943	634	1,641
Arizona	87	393	2,841	1,093	1,385	Nevada	40	431	3,297	1,289	1,189
Arkansas	89	277	1,898	445	498	New Hampshire	32	154	1,961	804	1,939
California	100	529	1,906	680	380	New Jersey	95	483	1,647	1,084	517
Colorado	96	284	2,850	758	1,330	New Mexico	57	372	2,369	740	1,162
Connecticut	86	468	2,123	1,036	292	New York	38	369	1,833	703	262
Delaware	90	641	2,169	483	556	North Carolina	94	375	1,828	544	318
District of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	78	72	2,246	309	2,598
Florida	100	680	4,095	930	157	Ohio	51	285	1,783	441	681
Georgia	36	307	1,635	750	362	Oklahoma	100	278	2,228	489	662
Hawaii	100	258	2,369	587	282	Oregon	88	240	2,940	571	1,529
Idaho	99	245	3,095	596	1,625	Pennsylvania	83	448	1,535	530	889
Illinois	23	910	2,461	3,292	193	Rhode Island	95	272	1,873	662	277
Indiana	61	423	2,053	553	868	South Carolina	99	387	1,842	762	364
Iowa	87	241	2,028	385	1,320	South Dakota	65	162	2,658	541	3,483
Kansas	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	Tennessee	51	242	1,814	500	431
Kentucky	19	566	2,543	843	630	Texas	99	261	1,872	628	598
Louisiana	85	473	2,318	697	234	Utah	76	275	2,943	656	1,438
Maine	95	118	2,882	472	705	Vermont	67	41	774	143	908
Maryland	97	555	2,338	1,313	377	Virginia	77	223	1,960	486	563
Massachusetts	79	526	863	433	371	Washington	69	368	3,542	521	1,072
Michigan	88	225	1,091	342	589	West Virginia	100	71	1,054	224	436
Minnesota	91	308	2,660	783	2,168	Wisconsin	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mississippi	39	197	2,023	589	429	Wyoming	96	116	2,570	880	3,569

[a] Throughout this Bulletin, juvenile arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of arrests of persons ages 10–17 by the number of persons ages 10–17 in the population. In this table only, arrest rate is defined as the number of arrests of persons under age 18 for every 100,000 persons ages 10–17. Juvenile arrests (arrests of youth under age 18) reported at the State level in *Crime in the United States* cannot be disaggregated into more detailed age categories so that the arrest of persons under age 10 can be excluded in the rate calculation. Therefore, there is a slight inconsistency in this table between the age range for the arrests (birth through age 17) and the age range for the population (ages 10–17) that are the basis of a State's juvenile arrest rates. This inconsistency is slight because just 2% of all juvenile arrests involved youth under age 10. This inconsistency is preferable to the distortion of arrest rates that would be introduced were the population base for the arrest rate to incorporate the large volume of children under age 10 in a State's population.

[b] Alcohol violations include liquor law violations, drunkenness, and driving under the influence.

[c] The reporting coverage for the total U.S. in this table (74%) includes all States reporting arrests of persons under age 18. This is greater than the coverage in the rest of the Bulletin (69%) because Florida was able to provide arrest counts of persons under age 18 but was not able to provide the age detail required to support most other presentations in *Crime in the United States 1998*.

NA = *Crime in the United States 1998* reported no arrest counts for this State.

Interpretation cautions: Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in reporting jurisdictions. While juvenile arrest rates in part reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the size of these rates. For example, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have higher arrest rates than jurisdictions where resident youth behave in an identical manner. Therefore, jurisdictions that are vacation destinations or regional centers for economic activity may have arrest rates that reflect more than the behavior of their resident youth. Other factors that influence the magnitude of arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of its citizens toward crime, the policies of the jurisdiction's law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. **Consequently, comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across States, while informative, should be made with caution.** In most States, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for these States are necessarily based on partial information. If the reporting law enforcement agencies in these States are not representative of the entire State, then the rates will be biased. **Therefore, reported arrest rates for States with less than complete reporting coverage may not be accurate.**

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), tables 5 and 69, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census' *Population of the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex: July 1, 1998* [machine-readable data file released in June 1999].

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Office of Justice Programs
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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Notes

In this Bulletin "juvenile" refers to persons under age 18. This definition is at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in 1998 in 13 States—10 States where all 17-year-olds and 3 States where all 16- and 17-year-olds are defined as adults.

FBI arrest data in this Bulletin are counts of arrests detailed by age of arrestee and offense categories from all law enforcement agencies that reported complete data for the calendar year. The proportion of the U.S. population covered by these reporting agencies ranged from 68% to 86% between 1980 and 1998, with the 1998 coverage being 69%.

Estimates of the number of persons in each age group in the reporting agencies' resident population assume that their population age profiles are like the Nation's. Reporting agencies' total populations were multiplied by the U.S. Bureau of the Census' most current estimate of the proportion of the U.S. population for each age group.

Data source note

Analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and from *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999, respectively); population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993), and for 1990 through 1998 from *Population of the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex: July 1, 1998* [machine-readable data files released June 1999].

This Bulletin was prepared under cooperative agreement number 95–JN–FX–K008 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

Acknowledgments

This Bulletin was written by Howard N. Snyder, Director of Systems Research at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, with funds provided by OJJDP to support the Juvenile Justice Statistics and Systems Development Program. Janet Chiancone is the OJJDP Program Manager for this work. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, specifically, Yoshio Akiyama, Ken Candell, Tom Edwards, Victoria Major, James Nolan, and Maryvictoria Pyne.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.